

Public Policy Committee
Montgomery County Commission on Aging

Notes of the meeting
April 14, 2011

Attendees: Jack Sprague, Rudy Oswald, Bob Tiller, Odile Saddi

1. State legislation

The legislature adjourned “sine die” at midnight on April 11th. Bob gave a brief introduction to the big picture with the state legislature – the legislative session is limited to 90 days, so adjournment is always in mid-April; we will have the same legislators for three more years, without an intervening election; bills that did not pass this year can always come back next year or the year after; members of the commission have begun to build and use relationships with our legislators.

Jack reported on the five bills that we supported this year:

- Medical Orders for Life-sustaining Treatment, SB 203 and HB 82 – this bill passed both chambers, and the governor is expected to sign it.
- Senior Center information, SB 230 and HB 329 – this bill passed both chambers, and the governor is expected to sign it.
- Communities for a Lifetime, SB 822 and HB 1188 – this bill passed both chambers after Senator Middleton made significant revisions to it, and the governor is expected to sign it.
- Financial Crimes – Seizure and Forfeiture, SB 411 and HB 1316 – this bill failed in the House of Delegates committee after Delegate Simmons unexpectedly expressed opposition.
- Permanent Absentee Ballot List, SB 409 and HB 787 – this bill did not pass because some counties were concerned about implementation. Jack and other observers expect that the concerns will be ironed out by next year and it will probably pass then.

As this list shows, we got three of our five bills through both chambers – an exciting accomplishment for a single legislative session. The committee appreciates the excellent cooperation and solid work on behalf of seniors by senators and delegates in our Montgomery County delegation, as well as some from other counties, and it also appreciates the efforts of commission members who testified and helped move bills forward.

2. County Issues

A series of face-to-face meetings between commission members and county council members to discuss budget priorities was recently completed. Staff set up the appointments and created the list of participants. Elaine Binder developed the position paper that was used for the visits, basing it on the discussion and decisions of the March commission meeting. In general the meetings went quite well; in fact, a few days ago the council’s HHS committee supported our principal request when it recommended that the \$100,000 cut in Home Care be placed on the Council’s Reconciliation List. But the council has about four more weeks before it must adopt a budget, so many more things could happen before final budget action.

3. Federal Issues

Arising from Rudy's concerns and initiatives, Elaine Binder has sent two letters in the last few weeks about the commission's federal budget concerns to four members of Congress who represent this county: Senators Mikulski and Cardin and Representatives Van Hollen and Edwards.

4. Summer study proposals

Bob reported that Leslie Marks is developing a summer study proposal related to accessibility or visitability. We do not know of any other proposals arising from members of this committee.

5. Next meeting

The committee proposes to skip its regular meetings for both May and June. Standing committees of the commission do not meet in July and August. Thus the next meeting of this committee will be in September, unless one of the co-chairs determines that we need to meet before September.